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IT SEEMS TO ME...

By Charles A. Sprague

At the White House Monday Pierre Salinger, the President's press secretary, acknowledged that Allen W. Dulles would retire as director of Central Intelligence Agency by the end of this year. He declined to confirm a "Newsweek" report that his successor would be Rower Hamilton, a New York lawyer.

Some have drawn the inference that the Dulles retirement is the sequel to the collapse of the Cuban invasion. They probably are in error. Kennedy at the outset of his administration asked Dulles to stay, and Dulles agreed to. The expectation however was that he would remain long enough to bridge the change in administration. He has served a good many years in this sensitive post and doubtless yearns for retirement or for return to his law practice in New York City. The early reports of faulty CIA intelligence on Cuba have been discounted. Had the agency been gravely at fault the President should have made the change right away. He didn't, so it is unsafe to assume that the Dulles retirement is not due to the CIA role in the Cuban affair.

What still needs to be written is the detailed history of that unfortunate episode in U.S. history. The country and the world, particularly Cuba, know the results of that ill-starred venture, the complete failure of the invasion even to gain a toehold on the island. We know that it had the blessing of our government, but not its active military support. The failure is attributed largely

to the latter, the lack of air cover for the landings and air attacks to immobilize Castro's air arm. The muster, organization and dispatch of the invaders is still quite shadowy.

These shadows contribute to a conflict among journalists over the affaire Cuba. In the Saturday Evening Post of June 24 its staff writer, Stewart Alsop, tells that White House emissaries were sent to inform the Cuban leaders that no American forces would be involved, but the Cubans "unanimously voted to go ahead with the plan regardless." The Washington News however, in a story by its writer, John T. O'Rourke, calls this "another big lie—or something so like one that it is almost impossible to tell the difference." His story, reprinted in U.S. News & World Report for July 31, quotes the Cuban leaders as saying they had not been advised of the change in plan, to withhold U.S. air support, and that they had no chance to decide on whether or not to invade or even knew what the time schedule was. Instead the members of the Cuban Council were "virtual prisoners of the CIA during the en-

tire disaster." They were flown from Miami to Washington to New York, driven around Long Island in cars and then to Philadelphia, and then flown to a Marine base at Opalaca, Fla. There they heard about the invasion when some one turned on the radio.

President Kennedy has shouldered responsibility for the Cuban fiasco, and his decisions both to favor the attempt and then to withhold U.S. aid proved faulty. Blame has been put on his "advisers"—on CIA and on the joint chiefs of staff. Each of these interposed hedges which now provide them with an escape hatch. There were grave errors at the top levels of government; also very serious errors at the operating levels. There CIA agents rather than men from the military arm were in command, and they did a lousy job. Allen Dulles' major failure may have been in the mistakes of his underlings in carrying out the mission. In any event it's time for him to quit the job, and for a new hand to take over. But we will have to wait a good many years before the full story of the 1961 Cuban invasion is told.